843 837 This law requiring a most strict fidelity lasts until the end of the bokeka for the husband, but until the weaning of the child for the wife. It is especially strict for the period of seclusion (see below, Article III, 3).

The violation of the essential stipulation of this interdict (-fénda bokeka) results either in the death of the woman during pregnancy and especially during seclusion or in the death of the child later on. [477]

A. If the woman dies during this period, the suspicion is placed a priori on her husband. The Nkundó say aɓfénda wálí, "he has transgressed against his wife." Unless he can prove his innocence through public actions, the judgment of a magician, or autopsy[sic].

If the woman has been the victim of a seducer, he is held responsible and must pay a large indemnity equivalent to the bride price that was paid for the deceased. If no other man is involved, the affair has no consequences.

843 763 754 845 853 In the past the combined autopsy and Caesarian section was always performed. It had a dual purpose: to remove the child and to examine the mother. If the operation revealed the existence of a "stomach" (likundú), the deceased was of a noxious (liloka) nature or constitution and therefore caused the death of her child. If the child remained alive, it proved that he was of a magically superior nature and was able to resist the natural evil spells of his mother, which thus turned against their unwitting author. (1)

1. The Nkundó believe that only animals have a "stomach" (likundú). If a human being has one, that is, if his viscera are large, curved, in compartments, in a word, abnormal, that person is an evildoer. He commits evil acts voluntarily or, most frequently, unknowingly. Some men with a likundú can be recognized by the fact that they eat their nails, hair, etc. The Nkundó must certainly have observed relationships between this habit and a deformity of the stomach.

853 The child is given to a wet nurse (a kinswoman, a stranger, a Botswa woman, depending on who is available).

847 If the mother's body shows no signs of evil-doing or of
845 "the hatred of others," it is thought that her death was caused
843 by evil spells on the part of the child. Thereupon some kill the child to prevent it from doing harm during its whole life; others, on the contrary, spare it despite everything.

843 If the husband (for it is he above all who is involved, since
837 he is most exposed to possible lapses) has unfortunately been guilty of misconduct, his wife has only a slim chance [478] of salvation. Nevertheless, it is still possible for her to be saved, on condition that from then on her husband abstain from any sexual act and from all the accidental gestures and actions described above. The least he can do under these circumstances is to inform his wife of his indiscretion so that she can take precautions. If he wants to [672] ward off any possibility of causing his wife's certain death, he sends her home and gives his father-in-law a pledge (ndanga) through which he recognizes his guilt and shows his intention to assume the entire responsibility for his misdeed. An upright man prefers to act in this fashion, for he never knows whether one day he will not inadvertently violate one of the prohibitions.

853 B. The child's death is the result of the putrefaction of
837 the mother's milk, the mother being thus incapable of nursing. As in the preceding case, the offense is a priori imputed to the husband -- isé aóoma bóna la ndota. (1) Since he has wronged no

[753] 1. Ndota is an illness caused by the violation of prescriptions of a sexual nature (See Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 2, A).

one but himself, no palaver ensues; the "natural" punishment is sufficient. This does not mean that he is not the object of evil tongues; people point at him and at times remind him of his misdeed. To remove the blame from himself, he can resort to

844 are not too rare. (2)

2. Ease in delivery is called bosânjá; difficulty is called bonsombo.

A husband asks his mother-in-law to come and help her daughter. Other kinswomen of the husband or the wife do not refuse [482] their services either. Among them there is always one who is more expert in these matters and who acts as a midwife (mbótsi).

The delivery takes place in the banana grove behind the hut; there is light and air there. In the house it would be more difficult.

The husband cannot be present at this event. His presence would make it difficult and painful. The further away he is, the better. The prohibition is not rigid, however; if there is no one to help his wife (as in the case of an unexpected delivery in the forest, etc.), he will have no hesitation whatsoever in helping her with all the power and skill at his command.

To facilitate the arrival of the child, the midwife gives the wife a potion to drink "in order to make slippery" (boté wă [278] bosɛ̆li), and administers a douche containing boímo bark.

If the pains continue for several days and all medication is ● 845 without results, it is assumed that some evil spell (liloka) is at work. To neutralize it the woman in labor is "blessed" (-saka). For that purpose her family and that of her husband each bring a stalk of the bokaakó plant (bosâánga). Two kinswomen, each with the stalk of her respective clan, squeeze out the sap with which they smear the woman's abdomen. After that the delivery takes place in a normal fashion.

845 The nkanga (doctor-magician) only intervenes when a woman 756 has already had several miscarriages or when all her children die. 769 If he is consulted he invariably attributes such misfortunes to the action of spirits of the deceased, who may be appeased by offerings and the promise that a manifestation of their will be heeded with respect to the naming of the child. Usually he adds that a few alimentary prohibitions must be observed until the child is weaned.

Article V. Name Giving

553 Naming does not occur on any predetermined date. It is not delayed without a special reason. No feast or ceremony accompanies the event. The father simply puts colored powder on the child's forehead as a sign of joy.

It is the father's right to choose a name for his child. Sometimes he asks for the family's opinion. Preferably he gives names of his relatives, deceased or living, or sometimes his own. But it is proper to respect the mother's feelings also. Failure to take them into account could provoke the woman to cause an abortion in order to punish him for being so willful as to neglect her family.

[845] [769] A painful childbirth, like the repeated death of preceding children, is often attributed to the rancor of a dead person who is discontented. In such a situation the Nkundó await the verdict [787] of a dream, or they have recourse to the judgment of a nkanga (doctor-magician) in order to be able to satisfy the irascible dead.

553 551 If the situation recurs too often, the calamity is attributed to a rivalry between dead persons who are fighting over which of their respective names should be given to the newborn; the envious loser kills the child. In order to avoid such mean vengeance and make everyone content while satisfying none, the father gives the child a neutral name or a Botswa name, such as Botswá, Sáka, Ɛfâlina (nameless), Botsilá (lack of success, bad luck), Litúli (dead without known cause), etc. If the child has already received a name, but for one reason or another the inauspicious fury of a ghost is feared, it is always possible to change from that name to another.

Children are usually given the names of relatives of the same sex. Exceptions are sometimes made, however, if one of the sexes is not sufficiently represented among the progeny, in which case the bearer of the name can always change it later, and he almost always does. Nevertheless, there are [500] no specifically male or female names, except for those that consist of the relative form of a verb, such as Ósâsuka, "the coquette," Óyêmengo, "she who comes with plenty," Ófénji, "she who excels." Finally, certain names are sometimes used for either sex.

551 The etymology of most names is impossible to trace, and they have no meaning. Some are borrowed from the nomenclature of the realms of nature or of things, but no attention is paid to their original meaning, and allusions to it -- sometimes attempted by certain Europeans -- are either not understood or badly received. Other names are dictated by the child's constitution, for example Ókunjolǒ, "who will be buried even today," or Báwáôlóí, "one dies only later." (1) Names sometimes also commemorate a special

1. Both names are intended to prevent allusions to the child's debility and to express the equivalent of the saying: it is but a life of languor.

event, such as a great mourning (Báwá, "they die"; Bálela, "people weep"), a rivalry (Báunela, "they fight for," meaning that two men are rivals for the possession of the mother of the child to whom the name is given). Finally, some names carry the meaning of a saying, such as Báwake, "all men must die," etc.

In closing let us repeat that persons who bear the same [572] name are often bound by a special friendship, give each other presents, and help each other. However, such a relationship does not entitle persons of different sexes to have intimate relations with each other, and if they do so such relations are treated as concubinage or simply adultery.

Article VI. Twins

845 Although for the Nkundó the birth of twins (baása, sing. jăsa), does not have the importance that other peoples attach to it [501], it does have some special features, the chief of which is the absence of the prohibitions and regulations that go with ordinary births. Twins are free from all common prohibitions; they are fulúngú. (1) Let is examine the details.

1. This is true even with respect to abstentions during mourning.

845 [202] The event is announced by the usual signal, but the signal is doubled or, if the children are of different sexes, the signal for each sex is given once. It is followed by the dance beat: two [535] or three long and two short.

The next day the father's relatives go outside the village, 845 preferably to a crossroads. On each side they plant a stalk of 778 lokókólókó. All around the stalk they spread a little heap of small branches and various leaves called jŭké. It is a sign and a place of benediction and good fortune. Each passer-by stops, picks two leaves, places one on each pile, spits on it, and says swá.(2) Then

2. Onomatopoeia for "spit."

they clap hands and twice sing out, yelí yeye. Such behavior brings the benediction of the twins upon a person's journey, his undertakings, his marriage. The umbilical cord as well as the placenta and membrane are buried under the heap.

Every morning the mother and father draw two stripes with 845 kaolin on the middle of their foreheads and on their arms, above 302 and below the elbow. They do the same to the twins. (3) They [386]

3. Sometimes a double stripe is added at the temples The kaolin may be used pure or mixed with the red paint called ngóla.

continue doing so until the child is weaned. If after that time one of the children falls ill, they begin again treating him in this manner until he is cured, taking care not to omit his brother, lest he too fall ill. For while these designs are signs of joy, they are [751] above all a prophylactic measure against children's fever (ikútswáki), [502] called wăsanyi when it occurs in twins or in a child following them, and manifests itself chiefly by tumors of the head and face.

Twins are invariably called Mbóyó and Bokétu, names 845 given to the first born and the second respectively, whatever their 551 sex. The Bombwanja (like the Ekonda) use the names Mbóó and Mpia, respectively. The mother takes the name of Ămbá.

845 However, these names are not used exclusively by such persons;
551 they may be given to others as well. The father, on the other hand, does not receive a new name; but he bears the title Is'éy'ăfé, which literally means "father of two." (1) Twins are also said to

1. Among the Ekonda he is called Buka.

be Ămbâmba (pl. Byămbámba) from the verb -ámba, "to accept, to receive," because they are permitted to accept and to take everything, since none of the usual prohibitions apply to them.

The mother of twins is not required to go into seclusion
845 (nyang'éy'aása áfóáte waékelé). The shed belonging to the head
343 of the clan, that is, the one in whose home important animals (leopards, etc.) are dismembered, is set up for her. (2) The shed

2. Therefore, at the bonsenge place or the place of dismembering important animals (nyama yă bikofo, literally "superb animals").

is closed by means of palms. Neither the parents, nor the helper, nor the persons who enter this place are required to observe continence or the other prohibitions involved in ekelé.

All the members of the kin group come to greet the twins
845 and give each one a present (hens, knives, arrows, food), which is received by the father or the mother. Whenever anything is given to one of the twins, even if it is the smallest object, the same must be given to the other; otherwise the latter would die. If the mother takes one in her arms, the other one must also be picked up, either by her or by the father. If she strikes one, she must also strike his brother. This [503] duality therefore applies to everything, and with even greater reason to nursing.

If a twin child cries or is ill, the parents must sing and
[534] dance to the accompaniment of a lokolé and a ngòmo drum, a ceremony called -bénga baása. If someone invites a twin or his

845 parents to the dance, they must go. When the mother passes a
[178] crossroads or the dwelling place of a spirit or an efeno (a place where the Nkundó gather for magical practices, oracles, etc.), she also sings and dances in honor of the spirit, so that he will favor her
845 children. Various songs are popular, such as: Elím'é'Ámbá
533 tongólela yelí yeye, "Spirit of Ámbá, do not weep; (1) Bokétu la

1. Tongólela is an archaic form still in use among the Ekonda, etc

Mbóy'é'Ambá tofúkáké tonyongáké, toléké bilingoi yelí yeye, "Ámbá's Bokétu and Mbóyó, do not bruise yourself, do not stir, do not eat bilingoi mushrooms"; Bokétu 'a Mbóyó njóátela ngóy' emengo yelí yeye, "Bokétu and Mbóyó, I surround my mother with abundance"; Bokétu'a Mbóyó lá'okono lá'okendo yelí yeye, "I shall fall ill, and yet I will walk (be well)"; Bokétu'a Mbóyó, lióta bokekesano yelí yeye, "difficult childbirth," etc.

Foods forbidden to twins are the mushrooms called bilingoi
845 (or bilingondo or bankánkíndá), the mpambí antelope, and the ólí
262 yam, which is also forbidden to parents whose child is not yet weaned. (2)

2. This prohibition extends to all food cooked in pots in which such forbidden foods have been prepared. The extension is characteristic of all alimentary prohibitions.

845 When traveling, the parents of twins gird themselves with the
484 creeping plant called boyayenga, or wear it like a strap over the shoulder. The mother also attaches a bell to it. Their hair is often
[301] adorned with two feathers from the tail of a gray parrot (nkoso) and two feathers from a white hen. [504]

845 The greeting to parents of twins and their reply must always
576 be double: w'ónó w'ónó, the reply em'ónó em'ónó; oóyá, oóyá, the reply bíka bíka. Note that the last greeting is not replied to differently

576
845 from the others. They thus rank with the great notables of the past. [sic]

845 When the children grow up and become self-sufficient, all
554 the special regulations lose their force and they become like everybody else. Nothing distinguishes them from the rest in marriage, death, etc. No preference is shown for or against them. But their descendants will again produce twins.

845 Thus the Nkundó consider twins as extraordinary children, but they do not carry this view to extremes. They are pleased to receive two children at a time, although they believe that under such circumstances the pregnancy and delivery are more dangerous for the mother. That is why she is called boyéngwá since, despite the seriousness of the situation, she did not die. This epithet is also applied to the father and to the twins, probably for the same reason as well as because of their immunity with respect to prohibitions. If the twins are of different sexes, however, the mother is not as likely to be called boyéngwá, since she is likoka, "harmful." (1)

1. See above, Article II, 3.

845 It is apparent from the above description that twins are
789 considered to be somewhat tainted with magic. The existence of
754 this belief is confirmed by the prohibition against throwing anything (stone, palm kernel, etc.) onto their hut, the same prohibition applying to anyone who possesses a charm or practices sorcery or protective magic. In addition they possess a certain innate ability to cast a spell over the activities (hunting, fishing) of others. That is why persons who are afraid of being harmed by them smear themselves with kaolin in the same way as do such children and their parents. [505]

845 The Nkundó have had cases of triplets, but they are extremely rare. The youngest of the three is called Yĕndembe, or Yĕndende, or Yĕlele. The only special practice with reference to the youngest one is that he can never be ordered to do any work, be sent to carry a message, run any errand, etc., áfótswé ntómo.

845 In other respects he is not differentiated from the other two. Greetings are not tripled in the case of triplets.

A child born directly after twins is called Wuteji (from utela, "to repeat"). He is in no way different from other children.

Article VII. Circumcision

Circumcision is generally practiced. It does not have to 304 be performed at any particular age. It is usually done during childhood before the tenth year. The more timorous put it off until puberty or even later. Special customs of individual clans sometimes set a time. Thus, a man of the village of Besombó is not allowed to be circumcised until he has killed an animal at the hunt. On the other hand, the season during which circimcisions are performed is specified: they must take place during the period when the water level is low.

The operation may be performed by any man who is expert at it. It is carried out behind the huts. No one but the boys being operated on and their fathers are present. The boys stand in a group somewhat apart from the proceedings but place themselves so that with their eyes they can follow the treatment to which their companion is being subjected. The patient squats. One of the elderly assistants places his hands over the boy's eyes so that he cannot see what is happening. The person performing the operation has already dug a small pit to catch the blood. He pulls the foreskin, ties it with a string, and then uses ashes to trace the line which must be followed by the empúte knife that is used on such occasions. When the blood has stopped flowing, he chews some bondóngó [824] pepper (Aframomum . . .) or, preferably, [506] a caudal fin of [825] the ngolo fish and then spits it onto the wound. The resulting sensation is very painful. But the patient shows that he is brave; for if he cries he is mocked by his companions.

As long as the wound is not healed, the boy must not use [262] manioc leaves (bangánju) or manioc bread in the preparation of bosombó or lóóto. Nor may he eat the skin, head, or tail of fish.

While the wound is healing, the boy who has been circumcised is cared for, washed, etc., by his mother or, if he has reached

845 puberty, by his father. The performance of this role entails continence (bokeka) for the person who undertakes it, even with respect to the spouse. A violation of this rule prevents healing of the wound or at least makes the process very long and difficult. (1)

[755] 1. A similar bokeka applies to anyone nursing a large gangrenous ulcer (wǎlé).

The foreskin that has been cut off is dried on the bolíkó (tray or shelf). Then no one bothers with it any longer, and it usually remains there, dusty and dirty, for an indefinite period of time if the rats leave it alone.

In the centers the young people are beginning to neglect [177] the native skilled in circumcising and resort instead to European surgeons.

Circumcision is not an occasion for feasts or ceremonies. [556] Sometimes a man who is rich and vain will give a feast, but this is not at all a common practice.

The term "to circumcise" is translated in Lonkundo as téna bonsoé, "to cut off the foreskin." The less vulgar term and one used much more frequently is téna nsóngé, "to cut off the tip." A much too decent circumlocution is téna batói, "to cut off the ears."

The reason for this custom has already been given in Chapter I, Part II, Article II, 2.

Article VIII. Education

868 From an early age a Nkundó child must perform various
857 small services for his parents, especially in the household; he is asked to draw water, fetch firewood, take care of a little brother or sister, etc. The demands for such services are addressed chiefly to girls, but boys are not at all exempt. By the very nature of things, however, the latter are less frequently asked to help.

Quite early a boy may accompany his father on trips, at meetings, legal debates, etc. The father makes a bow and arrows for him and teaches him the art of using them. The great pastime

624 thus, *Nsono* is a very prominent figure. Still arrayed as previously described, she sits outside the *nongo* near the road on the special stool of the *nkumu*. Nobody may pass her with food, a humane law, considering that she must spend the day fasting. If anyone attempts to do so she catches the unlucky individual, helps herself to as much of his food as she wants, the victim meanwhile begging her to be merciful and leave him a small portion, and the booty is taken into the *ipana*. During this sentinel duty *Nsono* must still keep the parrot's feather in her mouth and maintain silence, so, in case she catches an unsuspecting bearer of food, the remonstrance and argument are all one-sided.[1] After the first day *Nsono* no longer sits outside the *nongo* but goes from place to place in the village, choosing spots where people may least expect her, hoping thus to reap a bigger harvest for her pains. This is kept up for eight days, which comprise two Tumba 'weeks' of three days' work and one of rest. The rest-day is appropriately named *boina bo nsono* after the duty of *Nsono* of sitting doing nothing day by day. The eight days of this ceremony over, *Nsono* lays aside her gourd and plantain stalk, which are placed at the foot of the first central supporting post [302] of the *ebanga* on entering. She is given a fresh coating of chalk and three coloured stripes are drawn the length of her back and down her arms. She still remains close to the *nkumu*.

[567] Various personalities are connected with the *nongo* of an *nkumu*. The *Basele* is a male slave, clothed in a skin breech cloth, whose duty it is to receive callers at the *ipana* before admitting them to the presence of the *nkumu*.

624 595 *Mpenge* is the name taken by the wife first married by the *nkumu*. From henceforth she no longer accompanies her husband, and their cohabitation ceases unless the *nkumu* is willing to pay her each time the sum of one hundred rods. But the *nkumu* is obliged to eat all food she cooks for him even though they have a quarrel. *Mpenge* does not honour her husband with the special greeting accorded to *nkumu*, but greets her husband and all other *nkumu* as she would ordinary people.[2] The second wife of an *nkumu* must assume the name of *Iyombo Anganda*, but no importance attaches to her position.

624 516 Among the Tumba generally, apart from the Bonginda, a woman is chosen from the *molembe* to bear the title *Bolumbu Itina i Ekopo* (*Bolumbu*, the 'raison d'être' of the *ekopo*). She is, it would seem, a symbolical figure, a reminder that the *ekopo* owes its existence to the *molembe* of which this woman becomes the titular head. While the *nkumu* is still in seclusion the chosen woman is taken to the open space between the *ipana* and the row of sons' houses, known as the *nanda*. Here, in the presence of the assembled crowd she is praised by being addressed, '*Bolumbu Itina, bototo!*' and the crowd exclaims, '*Bwoo!*'[3] Strips of leopard skin, about eighteen

[845] [1] It is interesting to note that there are some exceptions to those who may be caught and robbed by *Nsono* during her eight days of watching. No member of the *molembe* may be thus treated, twins and their parents are exempt, and also all children born to the *nkumu* before he attains office, these being termed *mami*.

[554 595] [2] Besides *Mpenge*, a mother of twins is also exempt from according *nkumu* special salutations, and among some groups the father of twins is also exempt.

[3] This ceremony gives husbands of any village, whether they are members of the *molembe* or not, the opportunity to single out a favourite wife for special honour, for at this time any woman may be given the name of *Bolumbu*, though not with the significant complement of *Itina i Ekopo*. The ceremony is similar, is performed at the *nanda*, but besides receiving the strips of leopard skin, she must be divested of all her clothing, a new *lombo* and *mpango* are then placed round her, and the strips of skin then attached to the new belt.

must go to the *monkoko* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belonging to the sons of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises elsewhere and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *nongo* and thus be safe. No trees in the *nongo* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother of twins, twins, Batwa, *maomi*, and all members of the *molembe* and *ekopo* are exempt from the laws of the *nongo*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned; they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *nongo*, what corresponds to a warrant is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the *nkumu*. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *ekopo*; it must be done by one of the *molembe*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will try to get one of the *molembe* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender.

In war,[1] it is the *molomi o eko* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good fighters. He does not wear his *montolo* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war.

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the customary *nko boiko* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word, *bionge*, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same thing.

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious and can still speak, all 'free men' clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *monkiki*. Often this secure lashing in the sitting posture, known as *ilima*, is sufficient to finish the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it is announced that he is dead, *aohilwa*, this being in contradistinction to the customary phrase *aokoma moloko* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated 'husband' and 'wife' respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In future wars 'husband' and 'wife' were supposed to combine against their common foes.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *ilima* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the *monsepu* position which is the recumbent one used for ordinary people and slaves.